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Flowers of Britain





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THE

POWERS OF BRITAIN.

1813.





THE
POWERS
OF
BRITAIN.



RESPECTFULLY ADDRESSED
TO
The Legislature and People
OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM.



Bork:

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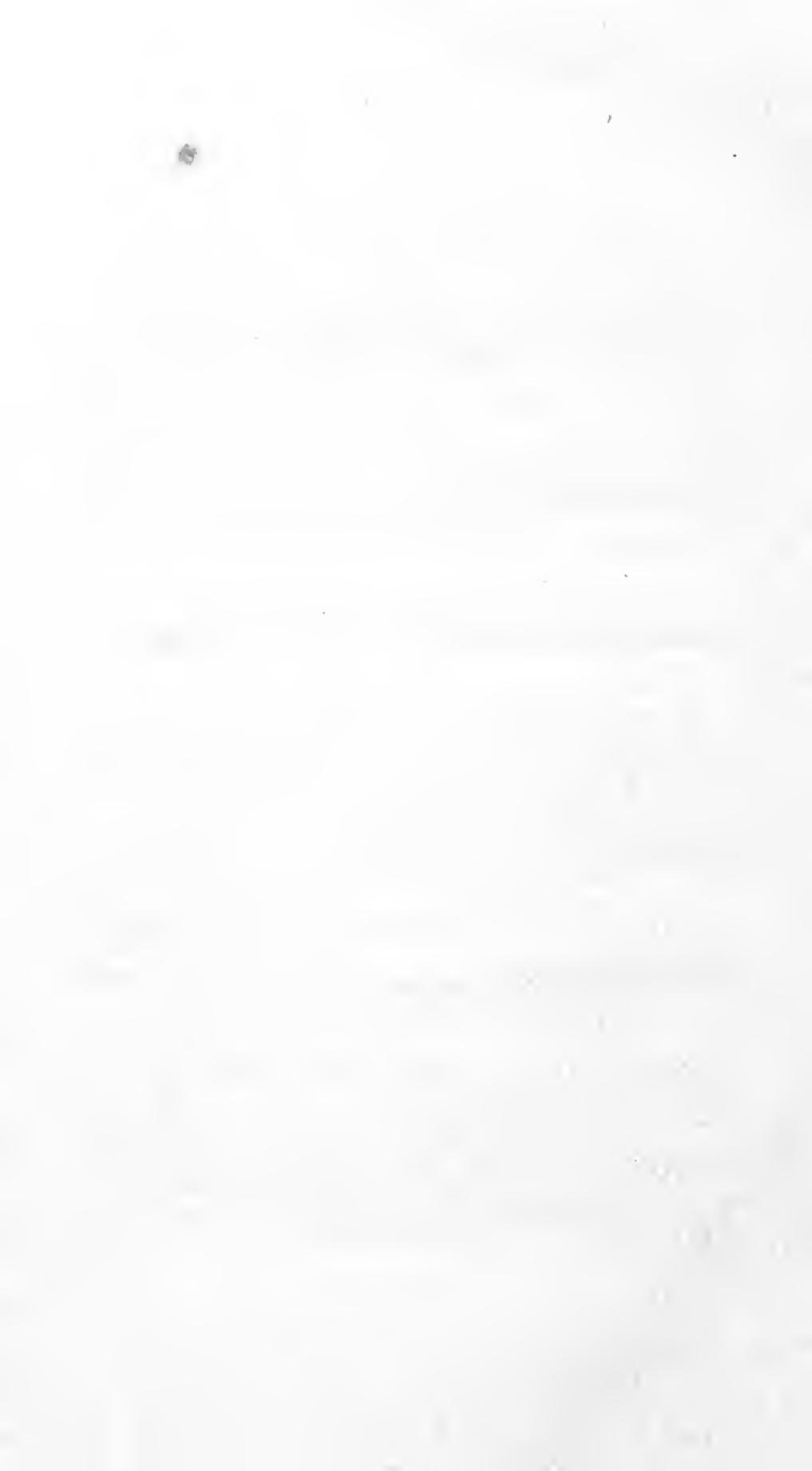
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OBSERVATION.

Should the following sketch, hastily composed, have any tendency, like the passing shower of spring on the outward creation, to germinate the seed of Universal Benevolence, sown by the spirit of the gospel; or should it excite to action the powers of some skilful cultivator, the Author will feel amply repaid.



THE
POWERS OF BRITAIN,
§c.

CANTO I.

ARGUMENT.

Address to the Deity.—To the Nation.—Pantry Bay.—Expedition to Egypt.—Acre.—Boulogne.—The British Fleet.—Rejoicings on Victories.

YE Powers of Albion, hail! or rather hail
Thou POWER SUPREME! whose chariot rolls
sublime
Upon the furious storm, which quickly hurl'd,
In wild confusion, monarchs from their thrones,
And awfully convuls'd a trembling world.
Thy hand Omnipotent can chase away

The waning darkness of the sable cloud,
And scatter it in wide expanse unseen ;
Or, in a moment, can thy *Fiat* turn
The deepest gloom to radiant beams of light.
O ! smile propitious on the humble muse,
And deign to animate a feeble pen,
Dipp'd in the stream of love to human kind,
Thy sacred cause—of “ Peace on Earth,” to
plead.

Ye Powers of Albion, hail ! but let the muse
While striving to exalt your meed of praise,
With gentle hand remove the veil, that hides
From your perception, the unfailing souree
Whence flow your blessings ; and the ample
stream
That bears, on rolling waves, Britannia’s bark,
And safely floats it to the port of fame.

Who rules the wind ?—Who binds the
wintry storm ?—
Within the hollow of his hand, who holds
The thunder ?—That Power who when arrayed

In human form, could rolling billows calm,
With—“Peace, be still!”—Who then preserv’d
thy land,
When Gallia’s fleet, with thrice eight thousand
foes,
Not only veterans, but inveterate too,
Conducted by a chief well skilled in arms,
Rode in thy ports, by Britons unopposed.?*

Did winds and waves spontaneous yield their
aid ?
Or roar’d the thunder at thy own command ?
Behold JENOVAH ; hear *Him* thus proclaim :
“ I send my lightning, pointed at thy foes ;
On them the vivid blaze and forked barb
Descend discomfiting.* The furious blast
Has issued from the cloud which threaten’d *thee*,
And boil’d the deep, whose foaming surges rage
Tremendous to thy foes ; but for *thy* land
I made this cloud, like Israel’s, a defence.”—
What slaughter of thy then contending sons,
By this PROTECTOR of thy realms, was spar’d !

* Psalms xviii. 13, 14.

Let not, my country, my lov'd native clime;
Let not the Powers that rule thy sea-girt isle,
Permit oblivion's veil, her fleet to shade,
When twice her hostile bands who dared the
wave,
Steer'd to the land, for Israel's bondage fam'd;
Twice met the adverse storm; were twice
compell'd
To bow submissive to the roaring winds,
And seek their native ports. Might not a storm
More raging still, have foil'd thy third attempt,
And in the briny gulph, thy sons entomb'd? ^b
Boast not thy fleets, which are at His control,
Whose awful nod suffices to destroy!

Tho' Sydney's prowess had the foe repell'd
From Acre's walls, so oft assail'd in vain;
Yet this defeat caused only transient joy: ^c
"Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, though*
The rod is broken, that has smitten thee;
For, from the serpent's root, there will arise
A cockatrice, whose fruit will surely prove
A FIERY,—FLYING SERPENT"—fill'd with rage.

* Isaiah 14, 29.

Thy foe tho' beaten, dared the hostile main;
Escap'd thy fleeting sails, and reach'd the shore.
Tho' foil'd by British arms, he left the field;
At his return, his country he subdued;
Despoil'd of freedom, and revers'd her laws:
First seized the Consul's, then the Regal power,
And threaten'd, in a lapse of time, thy land
Oh, Albion! to invade. At his command,
Were Gallia's hostile shores with troops
o'erspread;
Her ports with vessels to transmit them fill'd;
By fleets protected, and by fortresses:
So great their strength, form'd by superior art,
That Nelson tried his gallant skill in vain;
Before the olive-branch had been displayed,
Which, for a moment, wav'd its fading leaves.*

Thy gallant tars, unable to destroy,
Appal'd the trembling foe, within his ports;
Thy fleets maintain'd the watch with ready eye:
But, “If the Lord keep not the citadel,*
The watchman waketh but in vain.”—Hark, now
The loud winds roar, the agitated sea

* Psalm 127.

Combines, and thus the bulwarks of thy pride,
Thy wooden walls, are toss'd high on the waves,
And forc'd to shelter in Britannia's ports !^o
Not in one firm array they stem the tide ;
But flee th' unequal warfare with the storm :
Wide scatter'd like the chaff before the wind.

Let this convince thee, that another breath,
From Him whom winds and storms at once obey,
Had humbled all thy proudly tow'ring masts,
And hush'd *thy* thunder's roar, deep in the waves
Engulph'd. Let grateful accents oft arise,
To Him whose goodness to thy sea-girt isle,
Presiding o'er the storm, thy vessels spar'd.
Think not, Britannia, that thy fleets and arms
Alone can guard thee. Impotent their aid.—
Whene'er JENOVAH shall decree thy fall,
Full ample are his means to smite thy land,
Or rase thy seat of empire to the ground.

But Albion, hail ! how fondly hopes the muse,
The omen of the times, no direful scourge
Portends, no desolation in thy gates.
In sweetly pleasing confidence she trusts,

That He whose boundless, universal Power
 Protection grants by many or by few,
 Reserves far better things for thee, O! Isle,
 Selected to evince thy Maker's praise,
 And spread his gospel o'er th' admiring world.
 Yet as “ Humility preeedes the ascent*
 To honour's sacred throne ;” so bear in mind
 How clearly, to the wise discerning eye,
 “ Does pride presage destruction's direful
 rage !” †
 How oft and sure, “ A haughty spirit 'bodes
 A speedy fall !”

In thy prosperity,
 Soar not on high upon the airy wings
 Of exultation. Ah ! when vict'ry crowns
 Thy arms, or those of thy confederates ;
 If thou canst find a *Christian* source of joy,
 That myriads of thy fellow men are slain,
 And hurried out of life, cease not to waste,
 In dazzling meteors which illumie thy streets,
 The price of comfort to th' afflicted poor.

How is it that Britannia's feeling heart,
 So long attun'd to sentiments benign,

* Prov. 15. 33.

† Prov. 16. 18.

**These acts can sanction, with the voice of praise ?
Sure, such rejoicings, like the nauseous fumes
Of lamps exhausted, leave a noxious scent !**

**Here let the muse, in gentle strains, inquire,
On what events the gospel page ordains,
For Christians thus to testify their joy ?
Or even when the direful steel is sheath'd,
And the fair olive offers us her fruit,
Replete with blessing, not commix'd with wo,
Should not our deeds proclaim a song of praise ?
Can mirth, which bowls of wine too oft inflame ;
Can waste or riot offer incense pure ?
Or sound the voice of gratitude to Him,
Who, in his mercy, has confer'd the boon ?
May not such actions move Him to chastize ?—
If aught must testify, at those events
The feelings of a Briton's gen'rous mind ;
Grant aching hearts the balm of kind relief ;
Assist distress, and sooth the sorrowing soul :
Thus like the odours of the morning gale,
Some sweets afford, or some refreshment yield,
To mingle in the cup of human wo.**

CANTO II.

ARGUMENT.

The Divine Government.—Bonaparte.—Isaiah and Micah.—Averted wrath.—Slave Trade.—Kindness of Britain.—Bible Society.—Slavery.—The Scourge of Europe.—Ambition.—Warfare in Christendom.—Basis of a Treaty of Peace.

WHO disbelieves “the volume of that book,”
That sacred page, which stands the test of
time ;
Elucidating each revolving age,
The deep mysterious aims of the Seers,
Who guided by prophetic vision penn’d
Events to come, as if already pass’d !
And who that with minute attention reads,
The sacred oracles, but must believe
“ There is a God who judgeth in the earth,
Disposing of the kingdoms of the world ; ”
For purposes inscrutable by men !

View all thy efforts, Oh! my country, vain,
Whilst dire terrific years spun out their course;
Behold thy friends enslav'd ; and, like the snare
The wily fowler lays, gall'd Europe's chains
Yet tighter drawn by struggling to be free.—
Behold the “Serpent” darting on his prey ;
Not with the swiftness of the venom'd race,
But with the superadded speed of wings,
Resistless “flying with a flame of fire.”
How did those very years, with rapid stride,
Advance the progress of the mighty foe !
But view this “Sampson, of his flowing hair
Despoil'd, at once become like other men!”

Hast thou not heard the herald's voice pro-
claim,
“That nations shall not whet the vengeful blade,
Nor learn again the direful art of war ?”*
In full reliance on the sacred word,
The muse retains, with firm unshaken faith,
One consolation in distressing scenes ;
One animating, soul-sustaining hope ;—
That *Universal Love*, the glorious test

* Isaiah, 2, 4, &c.

Of gospel times, its sacred influence spreads,
 "Diffusing like the precious ointment pour'd
 On Aaron's head*"; and will triumphant prove,
 Uniting all who claim the name of Christ.

O, haleyon' days! we hail your bless'd approach:

For since the deepest gloom of night precedes
 The cheering twilight of returning morn;
 The horrid universal din of arms,
 The sounds of dying groans in fields of blood
 Of deepest hue, may be the harbinger
 Of times predicted by angelic choirs,
 Who sung the joyful anthem:—"PEACE ON
 EARTH."

Hail Albion's Isle! ye powers of Albion hail!
 As righteous deeds exalt a nation's fame;
 So will they, in the sight of Heav'n, ensure
 A portion of that favour which excels
 The grateful tribute of a nation's praise.
 The low'ring clouds with awful tempests
 charg'd,

Have often hung upon thy mountain's brow,
 And threaten'd ruin to thy fertile vales.
 Has not an arm Omnipotent, unseen,
 As often scatter'd darkness, and exchang'd
 Thy fears for joy, *suspending* threaten'd wrath?
 Canst thou, my country, with uplifted hand
 And prostrate heart, make thy appeal to God,
 And state a *claim* to such beneficence!
 Yet may his goodness spare, and try thee more;
 "Because in thee some traits of good are found."*
 No doubt but easing Afric's sable sons,
 Of rapine's dreadful yoke, (a noble deed,)
 Has prov'd like hallow'd incense in his sight.
 The sanction giv'n to thy gen'rous sons,
 To heal with wine and oil the wounds of war,^t
 Denotes advancement in the christian race,
 Fulfils one precept in the gospel code,
 Of "heaping coals of fire, by works of love."†

A refuge hast thou prov'd to all distress'd;
 Thy tender heart is mercy unrestrain'd;

* 2 Chronicles, 19, 3.

† Romans, 12, 20.

Thy friends have sought relief upon thy breast ;
And thou, in wonted kindness, hast embrac'd.
Thy very foes, have cast away the steel,
Which, just before, drew purple from thy veins ;
And, craving pity, ask'd it not in vain.
By force of arms they could not win thy shores ;
But their distress assail'd thy manly heart,
With weapons stronger than the bolts of war.
Their confidence in trouble sounds thy praise ;
While thou hast taught the world, the wan-
d'r'r's faith
Plac'd in Britannia's sons, is safely plac'd :
Thy gen'r'rous bosom glow'd with kind relief,
And hail'd each hostile suppliant as a friend.

Hark ! how the gladdening gospel tidings sound ;
In every clime proclaim'd, at thy command ;
Without distinction of thy friends or foes !
With one consent the saered scroll is spread ;
With one consent, for *Marsh* assistance yields,

Although oppos'd his futile works have
seem'd ;

Such are the ways inscrutable of Heav'n.

Sure these are tokens that the PRINCE of
PEACE,

Views with auspicious eye the bleeding world ;
And is preparing, in the hearts of men,
A place of regal empire ! Deeds of love
Have rais'd thee more than those of martial
fame ;

Though these are what the world calls splendid
deeds.

And who will venture to deny they are ?
If glory can be due to wreaking swords,
So highly tainted with thy brother's blood ;—
For whom, as for thyself, thy Saviour died !

Ah ! surely Britain, for some gracious end ;
Some nobler purposes than ruthless war,
The balances of power, in gospel times
Replete with wonders of redeeming love,
Are hung suspended from thy gen'rous arm,
By Him who rules the kingdoms of the world.
Permit the muse to bring before thy view,

The yet remaining wrongs of sable sons ;
 Thy sons in right, or by adoption thine ;
 Who, wrench'd from Afric's clime, their native
 soil,
 Are forced by transplantation to thy own.

When Israel's prophet warn'd her impious
 king,
 To flee for shelter from th' impending storm,
 The cloud perceiv'd, was only " like a
 hand."—*

Needs there a prophet's or a poet's eye,
 To see the cloud of wrongs accusing thee,
 And hovering o'er thy distant Western Isles ;
 By daily crimes, accumulating wrath ?
 Or can the sacred fire of justice cease,
 Of origin divine, thy heart to warm ?
 O ! may " the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS arise ; "†
 His bright effulgence spread o'er Albia's sons,
 Illuming with the beams of gospel light.
 May they behold, in full perspective drawn,
 The scenes of woe, of scourges oft applied

* 1 Kings, 18, 44s

† Mal. 4, 2.

To limbs enfeebled by the lust of gain ;
Of slaves hard toiling, where domestic love
Chased from the sable group, indignant spurns
At crimes, which *Christians* teach the negro
race.

Stand not aloof to anguish and distress ;
Nor, like the Priest and Levite, pass them by ;
But let thy mercy rise triumphant now,
To plead their cause with soft, resistless voice.
May thus well-timed repentance and unfeigned,
By works united, meet for thy misdeeds,
Avert the danger of the gathering storm !

No rude chaotic rage ; no dreadful shock
Of dire convulsion ; nothing to inflame
The hearts of even traffickers in men,
Is needful to effect the righteous deed :
Emancipation from the galling yoke.
By lenient plans, conducive to *their* wealth,
Who hold in servile bonds their fellow men,
Teach that self-interest, and her sordid train,
Are often, like inconstant fortune, blind ;
And often seek, by false, contracted schemes,
To gain the prizes which illude their grasp ;

Illude, because the greedy plans pursued,
Frustate the purpose of the selfish mind,

Prepare by gradual, yet effectual means,
With tenderness applied, thy sable sons
To feel themselves like men ; and then redeem,
From thraldom, and oppression's iron chain,
By their own labour, their own barter'd blood :
Before “ thy labourer's hire, by fraud kept
back,
With cries too piercing to resist the claim,
The ears shall enter of SABAOTH's LORD*.”

Hail, Albion's isle! ye powers of Albion hail!
With one accord incline a pitying ear;
Exert your efforts in a legal view,
Combin'd with those which social bonds induce,
Join hand in hand, that this imperial realm,
By one grand effort more, may raise its fame
Through righteousness to more exalted praise:
The praise of God transcending that of men.

Whilst politicians, oft, their plans dictate,
 And party-men assume a hostile air ;
 While parasites are lavish of their praise,
 The muse, though fervent in the glorious cause,
 Yet steers the middle course : “ For conscience’
 sake,*
 Respectfully obeys the powers that be ;”
 And humbly craves of “ Him who turns the
 heart
 Of rulers at his will, like purling streams,”†
 That they may prove themselves “ ordained of
 God.”‡

Thy potent foe, the scourge of Europe’s sons,
 Who rul’d the nations with his iron sway,
 Most dreadfully convey’d, in sad disguise,
 What time and peace to blessings may convert,
 Be yours, ye sons of Albion’s favour’d isle,
 The far more pleasing office to console ;
 To imitate the good Samaritan ;
 And bind and heal the wounds, the sword has
 made.

* Rom. 13. 5, 1.

† Prov. 21. 1.

‡ Rom. 13. 1.

Should smiling peace present her olive wand;
With gratitude accept the proffer'd boon :
Be not severe, thou gen'rous Nation ; no !
Ask not the utmost, which thy rights can claim,
From nations long oppress'd. With liberal
hand,
Thy wonted, liberal, distributive hand,
Thy kindness deal. Demand not for thyself,
A compensation for thy anxious toils,
Beyond what thy allies or foes can bear.

Inquire of ages that have roll'd their course,
And bought experience at the dearest rate ;
If one can vie with this in which we live,
The MADNESS of AMBITION to display !
Behold, Britannia, what effects result
From hard compulsion to endure a yoke !
Be thou incited mildly to retain,
By force of friendship ; not by force of arms ;
That power with empires which thy gen'rous
deeds,
Constrain them, freely, to pronounce thy due.

Inquire of ages which have run their course—
Since Heav'n was pleas'd by heralds to proclaim,
That “ Peace on earth,” should be the gospel
theme,

If e'er *all* nations that believe in Him,
Who, like an infant, then on earth appear'd,
At once had cause with bitterness to sigh,
For thousands and ten thousands dead in fight!
And may we not with confidence inquire
What age can with this gospel day compare
Evincing all the Christian world conjoin'd
With heathens in such universal joy,
To search the records of consummate love?

Then, since chaotic matter first obey'd
Th' Almighty Fiat of creative power,
In any epoch, have events combin'd,
Propitious for the nations to unfurl
The glorious standard of “ the PRINCE OF PEACE,”
Like that for which we look with longing eye;
With animating hope?—When all the powers
Contending now, shall sheath the blunted sword?
What could secure the earth from future war
So fully as a mutual compact made,

THE BASIS OF THE PEACE, that future wrongs
Of realm and realm should finally be judged,
As those between the subjects of one king ?

Each nation might depute a sovereign Judge
Replete with powers to hear the mighty cause,
Thus by such wise and legal rules defined,
As were adapted to contending kings ;
All nations by their peers might then be judged ;
Their cause decided by no other sword
Than JUSTICE bears, th' ensignia to denote,
Her balances of right are held with power.

In this imperfect age of Christian love,
If justice should not bear imperious sway,
And her decrees for ever banish *War* ;
Yet Heav'n's approving and propitious smile
Would crown her efforts ; and His holy arm
Her sword would guide to strike the fatal blow,
Which must *that* cruel monster prostrate lay ;
And stop his course, if not at once destroy.
Thus Justice would arrest the direful scourge,
The dread companion of the warrior's boast,
Whose scorpion stings would else annoy mankind.

Fair Albion, hail ! and all ye powers who rule
These favour'd isles, this great imperial realm !
Treat not as mere chimera what the muse,
With humble fervour, casts before your view.

DELIBERATE.—And may the God of Peace Direct your councils to exalt his cause.

And what could equally extol thy fame,
My country, highly honour'd and belov'd ;
Now, at the moment when thy gallant sons,
Victorious ride upon the rolling wave,
And wrest the well contested palm on land ;
As to evince with fervency thy zeal,
And bow submissive to the gospel yoke ;
Thus for the nations twine an olive wreath ;
Whilst by the Christian act, thou wouldest
proclaim
Thyself the champion of the *King of Kings* ;
And crown thy *noblest* acts, with nobler far—
ONE BOLD ADVANCE TO UNIVERSAL PEACE.



Should the Reader wish to recur to events noticed in the preceding lines, they may be more clearly revived in his recollection by the following

NOTES.

a page 9. During the last rebellion in Ireland, a French General of acknowledged skill, having under his command 25,000 well disciplined troops, rode in Bantry Bay for several days; and his landing was opposed solely by the hostile elements.

b page 10. The fleet employed in the expedition against Egypt, sailed twice with a fair wind, and was twice driven into port again, with some damage. The third attempt was permitted to succeed.

c page 10. Bonaparte, in repeated assaults on Acre, was repulsed with dreadful slaughter by Sir Sidney Smith, at the head of a few British troops, assisted by the Turks. The French General, however, got on board a frigate, sailed for France; and soon after his arrival, had sufficient influence to obtain the dignity of first Consul; and thus laid the foundation of that ambition and power, by which he subjected most of the nations of Europe.

d page 11. Lord Nelson made an unsuccessful attack on Boulogne, before the short peace of 1802.

e page 12. The British fleet whilst blockading the flotilla designed for the invasion of this country, was driven off the French coast, dispersed, and obliged to shelter in various ports.

f page 18. During the Continental war, pecuniary assistance was transmitted from Great Britain, with the allowance of Government, to relieve the *peaceable* inhabitants from distresses, occasioned when their countrymen were in a state of hostility against this nation.— And to the honour of Bonaparte it should also be stated that he did not prevent the relief being extended.

g page 27. The author does not pretend to originality in these ideas; but trusts the sentiments of various writers of eminence, will be found coincident with the positions here advanced.

F I N I S.

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